

Study Possibility:
Constructed Responses



While any student-created response can be categorized as a “constructed response”, a written **short constructed response** is generally defined as a few sentences to a paragraph crafted to answer a specific question or set of questions. Short constructed responses allow students the opportunity to **demonstrate what they understand and know** about a topic, text, or unit of study. Short constructed responses also **uncover student misconceptions**, making them an ideal formative **assessment tool** to inform instruction and students’ next steps. Many more formal assessments include a short constructed response component including the DRA2 (after level 28), the BEAR (grades 1 & 2), and CSAP, though short constructed responses must be written across the instructional day and year. Refer to the **Writing to Learn** unit of study in all of the elementary **Writing Curriculum Maps** for additional information.

A few tips for crafting short constructed responses after reading and interacting with text...

- **Actively read the question** carefully-underline or box key words and phrases.
- **Plan the response**-use a graphic organizer if needed; think about your answer and locate details from the text to support your response.
- **Write the response** by using words from the question and state the answer clearly.
- **Add text details** in complete sentences-include proper nouns from the text.
- **Write a concluding sentence** to wrap up your response-tie this to the question.
- **Proofread the response** to ensure readability and to make sure the question has been answered with the requested number of text details.

Adapted from *The Forest and the Trees* by Emily Kissner (2008)

Remember:

- ✎ Students must **support their answers** with details from the text.
- ✎ Students should not **over rely on background knowledge** about a text/topic, but should search for evidence in the text (including notes and diagrams/graphics).
- ✎ Students need to be **taught the difference** between vague and specific details.
- ✎ Include **student self-assessment** throughout the year to help student writers internalize the process and expectations related to creating short constructed responses.
- ✎ All responses are **prompted** responses!
- ✎ Short Constructed Responses should be crafted in **every content area** across the year as well as across the years to make student thinking visible.

Study Possibility:

Constructed Responses (continued)



Constructed-response questions require readers **to build a response** to a question with support from a text. Any response to a question is a **constructed response**.

Constructed responses are everywhere...

- A survey
- Text message
- College application
- Written part of a job application
- An email
- Directions or explanations of any kind

Quite simply, a “constructed response” is a response built (constructed) to respond to a question.

“In the broadest sense, constructed response assessments could refer to almost anything other than objective quizzes, including essays, art projects, and personal communication.”

<http://fcit.usf.edu/assessment/constructed/construct.html>

Constructed responses are not always test items. Constructed responses can be used to guide instruction in the classroom - used as **formative assessments**. Teachers use constructed responses all the time...

- *ticket out the door,*
- *reading reflection,*
- *a question on a quiz that requires students to write,*
- *self-assessment.*

Connections to Jeffco Curriculum:

There are many opportunities on the **Writing Curriculum Maps** to explore constructed responses through **writing to learn**.

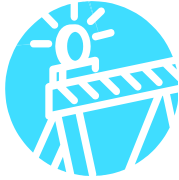
And there are opportunities to explicitly teach **HOW** to write a constructed response through out the year – **learning to write**.

Note: In this document, see the **Explanations Paragraph** page and the **Writing to Learn** page for further ideas.

Study Possibility:
Constructed Responses (continued)



Constructed response questions may assess higher level thinking, such as:



- comparisons, contrasts, causes, effects, changes
- identify patterns or conflicting points of view
- categorize or summarize information
- construct graphs or charts from data
- state a generalization, conclusion, explanation or prediction
- open-ended essay questions that demonstrate cognitive knowledge and reasoning.

When writing a constructed response, the writer:

- includes **evidence from the text** that supports the response to a question;
- makes sure **all parts of the question** have been fully answered;
- uses **specific vocabulary**, e.g., from the question, from the text;
- **demonstrates comprehension** of the text through a response.

Instructional Ideas:

- In **Better Answers** by Ardith Davis Cole, the author discusses key terms used in constructed responses and gives examples. (p. 24-27)

[Click here for an excerpt.](#)

- Emily Kissner, in her book **The Forest AND the Trees**, has developed an acronym to help students answer a constructed response. The acronym, **SEE** is a simple way to remember **statement**, **examples**, and **explanation**. (p. 158)

S – Statement

E – Examples

E - Explanation